



Santa Fe Audubon Society

Melrose, FL



<http://www.santafeaudubon.org>

and



Santa Fe Audubon Society - Florida

## SFAS NEWS

**MARK THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR**

### SPEAKER SERIES PROGRAMS 2024 - 2025

October 8, 2024 ----- **BATS** speaker Donna Bear

November 12, 2024 --- **AMERICAN KESTRELS** speaker Karl Miller

December 10, 2024 --- To be announced

January 14, 2025 ----- **BIRDS OF THE EVERGLADES** speaker Richard Rathe

February 11, 2025 ----- To be announced

March 11, 2025 ----- **CONSERVATIONIST AWARD • ELECTION OF OFFICERS • PHOTO SHOW**

April 8, 2025 ----- To be announced

May 13, 2025 ----- To be announced

*You do not need to be a Santa Fe Audubon Society chapter member to attend our Speaker Series programs. All are welcome!*

### FIELD TRIPS 2024 - 2025

*Reservations will be required. Field trips are subject to date change or cancellation due to weather, etc.*

Saturday, October 12, 2024 ----- **Cones Dyke Paynes Prairie** - Micanopy, FL  
For migrating warblers

Saturday, November 16, 2024 ----- **Cones Dyke Paynes Prairie** - Micanopy, FL  
For wintering sparrows

Saturday, January 10 & 11, 2025 -- **Boat Trips on Santa Fe Lake** - Melrose, FL  
For wintering waterfowl and gulls

Saturday, February 22, 2025 ----- To be announced

Saturday, March 29, 2025 ----- **O'Leno State Park** - High Springs, FL  
For spring migration

Friday, April 18, 2025 ----- **Sweetwater Wetlands Park** - Gainesville, FL  
For Bobolinks and more

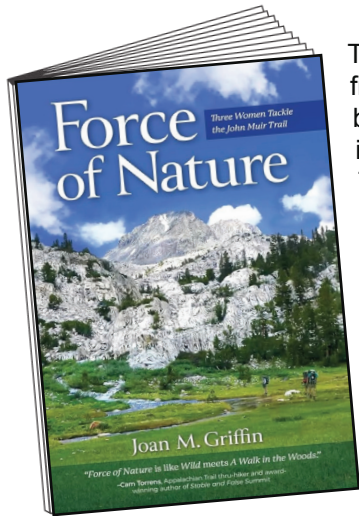
May 2025 ----- To be announced

**RECOMMENDED READING**  
from Jacqueline Williamson

**FORCE OF NATURE**

**Three Women Tackle the John Muir Trail**

by Joan M. Griffin

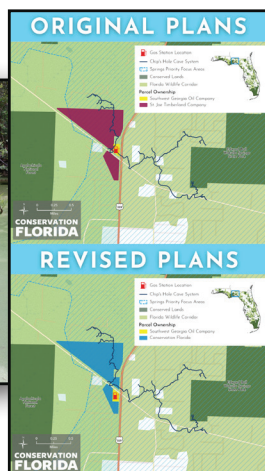


Three friends, women in their fifties, set out to hike “the most beautiful long-distance trail in the world,” the John Muir Trail. From the outset, their adventure is complicated by self-inflicted accidents and ferocious weather, then enriched when they “adopt” a young hiker abandoned by her partner along the trail.

*Force of Nature* is equal parts gripping adventure tale, personal memoir, and vivid nature writing.

**GOOD NEWS**  
by Jacqueline Williamson

**COUNTY CAVE SYSTEM  
CONSERVED  
WILL OPEN AS PUBLIC PRESERVE**



**Wakulla County, FL** - In June approval was giving by the Florida government to fund Conservation Florida’s \$3,782,000 request to conserve Chip’s Hole in Wakulla County and relocate a proposed gas station from development over the cave complex.

With funding approved, Conservation Florida will purchase the 225 acres.

**THE NATIVE  
PLANT CONNECTION**

**What are native plants?**

Native plants are those that occur naturally in an area. Florida is home to thousands of native plant species. Many are stunningly beautiful; some occur nowhere else in the world. Over many millennia, our native wildlife – including birds – have adapted to the resources provided by the native flora. Native plants are, in a real sense, “home” for our birds.

*Pokeweed* is loved by many bird species. Red-eyed Vireos feast on these berries.



**Why are native plants important for birds?**

In a word: insects. Virtually all land birds – 96% - require insect food for their young. Native plants support healthy populations of insects, including caterpillars, that breeding birds feed their nestlings. However, nonnative plants contain foreign compounds that most native insects won’t eat. Without insects for food, baby birds starve. By adding native plants to your yard, you can help repair the imbalance created by non-native plantings and ensure the survival of future generations of birds.

Your yard – and the kinds of plants in it – matters to birds! As natural areas for birds continue to decrease, so do native plants and the important food sources they provide for birds.



White caterpillars of the *Zebra Longwing* butterfly and orange caterpillars of the *Gulf Fritillary* butterfly feasting on *Passion Vine*.

For additional information on native plants for birds:  
<https://www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds>

Florida Native Plant Society for info and plant lists and sources.  
<https://www.fnps.org>

# BIRD OF THE MONTH

**KILLDEER** (*Charadrius vociferus*)  
band code "KILL"



L to R: Wilson's Snipe, Least Sandpiper, Killdeer, Least Sandpiper and Lesser Yellowlegs

A shorebird you can see without going to the beach, Killdeer are graceful plovers common to lawns, golf courses, athletic fields, and parking lots. These tawny birds run across the ground in spurts, stopping with a jolt every so often to check their progress, or to see if they've startled up any insect prey. Their voice, a far-carrying, excited killdeer, is a common sound even after dark, often given in flight as the bird circles overhead on slender wings.

## COOL FACTS:

The Killdeer's broken-wing act leads predators away from a nest, but doesn't keep cows or horses from stepping on eggs. To guard against large hoofed animals, the Killdeer uses a quite different display, fluffing itself up, displaying its tail over its head, and running at the beast to attempt to make it change its path.

For more information about Killdeer go to:

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Killdeer/overview>

**Fun Fact:** A group of Killdeers are collectively known as a "season" of Killdeers.



We are still tracking 4 of the 5 fledglings we put tracking devices on. The 4 four are still expanding their search for a home range.

I haven't been able to get a visual on any of the young in the last month, but the radio devices are still transmitting and 4 are clearly moving around.



## JAY WATCH 2024

Several SFAS Board Members and others volunteered in this summer's local Florida Scrub-Jay "Jay Watch".



# Adventure

Starts Here

## Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park



### What To Do:

Come celebrate Smokey Bear's 80th Birthday at Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park! We will have several activities to educate and promote prescribed fire, including a prescribed burn demonstration (11:00, weather-permitting), touch-a-fire-truck, Smokey Bear Storytime (12:00) and meet-and-greet, and more!

### Where To Do It:

Located in the Picnic Area at Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park. The event will be held Friday August 9th from 9:30 AM-1:00 PM.

Program is free with paid park entry of \$4 per vehicle.

### Contact:

Annalee.Maloney@FloridaDEP.gov or (352) 679-0898



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